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If the Bush administration gets its way, a woman's right to choose will lose out to a medical provider's right not to.

Confidential documents leaked last week expose the White House's intention to redefine birth control as a form of abortion, and to allow health care providers to invoke -- and inject -- their moral conscience into medical decisions.

Under rules changes being considered by the Department of Health and Human Services, if a nurse or doctor felt a moral reluctance to counsel a woman about birth control, he wouldn't have to do it. If supervisors insisted, they could be sued. Health centers failing to follow this moronic policy would risk losing federal funding.

It's highly debatable, even doubtful, these broadly written proposed regulations will be approved, but Congress is taking no chances, petitioning the president and HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt to drop the whole thing.

The very existence of such proposals, however, remind pro-choicers of the need to stay vigilant against stealth attacks to restrict a woman's right to think for herself.

Let's call this what it is: psychological warfare. While most of us await an abortion-rights smackdown at the Supreme Court level, anti-abortion activists are diligently working on state and federal regulatory levels to turn back pro-choice gains. Their weapon is scientific and moral confusion.

Colorado residents, for example, will vote on an initiative in November seeking to define "personhood" as beginning when an egg is fertilized by sperm. This directly conflicts with the accepted medical view that life starts at implantation -- the fertilized egg takes up residence in the uterine lining. Birth control blocks ovulation by keeping an egg from being released into the

ovaries. It also alters the uterine lining so it cannot support a fertilized egg. No implantation means no "personhood" means no abortion.

At stake here is a woman's ability to get complete information about safe and effective birth control. Patients would have no way of knowing they're not getting the full story. Mainstream Americans who readily accept the health and lifestyle benefits of birth control are now fair game.

If the proposed HHS regulations were approved, Illinois pharmacists could refuse, citing religious objections, to fill prescriptions for the morning-after pill. Rape victims might not be able to get an abortion to stop an obviously unintended pregnancy. A clinic employee at a federally funded center, who by law doesn't have to participate directly in abortions anyway, could impose her views on patients by refusing to discuss birth control options.

"We have a number of end-of-administration issues that can potentially hurt a woman's right to choose," said Congressman Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), who's been working with pro-choice Republicans to protect women's family planning rights under Title X.

But the Bush White House can't hear them over the drumbeat of anti-abortion activists, like the American Life League who brought us The Pill Kills Day '08 on June 6. Their slick online marketing uses phony science to confuse women about birth control.

These are tactics, not facts.

I respect people who believe abortion is murder and can't stomach any sanctioning of it. But even women who are against abortion are made to feel awful for taking the Pill.

When someone tries to make a point by holding back facts, I question their motives. The last thing we need is a distracting debate on what constitutes abortion. This is a medical definition, not a political one.

Nothing and nobody should supersede a woman's right to determine what's best for her health based on the best and most accepted science.